estimates of consumer expenditure data obtained for the years 1987-88 (NSS 43rd Round) and 1993-94 (NSS 50th Round), it is observed that the ratio of per capita consumption of the non-poor to poor declined from 2.30 in 1987-88 to 2.22 in 1993-94 in rural areas and from 2.76 to 2.70 during the same period in urban areas.

(c) The gap between the poor and non-poor is attempted to be reduced through acceleration of economic growth and direct income generation of the poor bypassing the general growth process, through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building.

Developmental assistance for North-Eastern Region

1645. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no growth or development assistance in North-East despite increasing Central assistance in the current financial year; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING. MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OFTHE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. In fact, the North-Eastern States have achieved higher literacy rate and lower crude birth/death rate and infant morality rate than the All-India average. However, the growth in per-capita Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) at constant prices (1980-81) of these States during the period 1992-93 to 1996-97 ranged between 1.63% (Assam) and 7.19% (Tripura), as compared to 5.33% recorded at the national level. The major factors contributing to the slow growth in per-capita. income in these States are:

(i) Higher level of administrative cost.

(ii) Poor resource base.

(iii) Increasing security related expenditure.

(iv) Under-utilization of funds available under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes owing to inadequate provision in Annual Plans to meet the States' shares.

(v) Low level of investment in the industrial Sector.

To ensure speedy economic development of the Region, several steps have been taken to augment the development assistance from the Centre, which include:

(i) 0% of Normal Central Assistance is earmarked for Special Category States, which include N.E. States.

(ii) 90% of Plan assistance is grant and 10% loan as against 30% grant and 70% loan for other States.

(iii) State's contribution of 15% which is mandatory for the Basic Minimum Services schemes, is not applicable to N.E. States.

(iv) 10% of Plan provision of the Central Ministries/Departments has been earmarked for development of N.E. States.

(v) Over and above the State Plan outlays, which have been increasing over the years, funds are also being sanctioned out of the Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources created through transfer of unspent balance of the earmarked outlays of the Central Ministries and Departments meant for development of the N.E. States.

(vi) The North Eastern Council is also engaged in the development of infrastructure in the Region.

(vii) Special dispensation has been made in respect of the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) by incorporating minor irrigation projects for the North-Eastern States and allowing 25% of the State's share, as against 33% for others, in availing of Central Loan Assistance.

(viii) Diversion to the extent of 20% of the Normal Central Assistance (Plan) is allowed for Non-Plan purposes.

(ix) Sensitizing States on the need for reducing the non-plan expenditure.

Long Term plan for the development of Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput districts

1646. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sanctioned fund for implementing a long term plan for the development of Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput (KBK) districts in Orissa;